

**Feedback on Final Update on Progress Implementing  
A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-09  
College of Education  
Spring 2010**

As evidenced by the programs and activities presented in its final update, it is clear that the College of Education maintains a serious commitment to diversity. Especially commendable are the College's efforts in recruiting and retaining a diverse student body—through various outreach programs within the College, State College, and the commonwealth community; through partnerships with other colleges and organizations; and via mentorship on both the undergraduate and graduate level.

The inclusion of diversity goals in the promotion and tenure process is a potential best practice in creating an overall welcoming environment and college climate. The elevation of the Multicultural Coordinator position to Assistant Dean is a best practice that has the potential to help diversify leadership and management, and to promote organizational and institutional change. Clarification is needed as to whether or not a climate survey was implemented during the review period, and if so, how and/or if the results were reported and used. *Response: We conducted a climate survey across the College during the previous review period. The results of the survey guided the development of our diversity plan for the period 2004-2009.*

Future reporting would be strengthened by the inclusion of metrics demonstrating how strategic goals will be accomplished, and by the identification of key persons responsible for implementing these goals. Equally important, though, reporting of actual results and accomplishments is needed.

**Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations**

***Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity***

- ❖ Efforts to improve the accessibility and visibility of the college Web site for persons with disabilities are commended.
- ❖ The team notes the concept of yearly diversity themes (i.e. LGBTQA issues in 2008-09, and Celebration of the American Indian Leadership Program in 2009-10) as a positive initiative, but cautions the College not to exclude other groups while pursuing these discrete themes.
- ❖ It is admirable that the Assistant Dean for Multicultural Programs provides advocacy services for students belonging to historically marginalized groups, and for students involved in racial, ethnic, or cultural conflict. Is there a similar service available for faculty and staff?
- ❖ The College's definition of diversity as stated in the update is somewhat narrow; the team recognizes, however, that expansion and refinement of the definition is addressed in the 2010-15 plan. *Response: (Bullet # 3) Advocacy and support services for faculty and staff are provided through different avenues depending on the nature of particular need, issue or conflict. These avenues include the Office of Human Resources, the Office of Affirmative Action, the College's Sexual Harassment Resource Contacts, the Associate Dean for Research, Outreach, and Technology, the Associate Dean for Undergraduate and Graduate Studies, the College Ombudsman, the Chair of the Faculty Council, the relevant Department Head, etc. These points of contact are described on the College's web page for faculty and staff.*

***Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate***

- ❖ The team acknowledges the College's initial efforts in developing metrics for creating a welcoming climate, and suggests ongoing, strengthened attention to ensure success of these endeavors.
- ❖ Faculty/Staff survey results were shared with the College's Faculty Council and discussed with Department Heads. The College is strongly encouraged to share the survey results with all employees.
- ❖ Best Practices: Inclusion of classroom climate language into the promotion and tenure guidelines is an impressive accomplishment, and a best practice. The Climate Enhancement Award recognizing faculty, staff, and students who strive to improve the college climate is also a best practice.

### **Representation (Access and Success)**

#### ***Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body***

- ❖ The College's outreach efforts and collaborative partnerships in recruiting K-12 students are applauded.
- ❖ E-tutoring and academic success programs are among the College's various efforts demonstrating its commitment to increasing retention and graduation rates.
- ❖ Use of the newly created Multicultural Advancement Alumni Council (MACC) in advancing diversity recruitment goals is noteworthy.
- ❖ Best Practice: In response to tuition increases, developing new ways to identify and award scholarship funding to students may be a potential best practice. The College is encouraged to track success of new methods as they are implemented. .

#### ***Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce***

- ❖ Although a number of initiatives have been implemented to increase faculty diversity, data do not demonstrate that effective strategies are yet in place. The percentage of diverse faculty (17.4%) has decreased 2.4% in the last five years; 2008 Penn State Fact Book data indicate that the average percentage of non-white faculty in University Park colleges is 18.3.
- ❖ Mentoring would be a positive addition to the college's faculty and staff retention efforts. ***Response: We do provide mentoring opportunities for faculty and staff and will continue to explore ways to make these experiences more productive.***
- ❖ The practice of extending second visit invitations to diverse faculty candidates to meet with relevant communities is a positive initiative. Applying a similar practice to external diverse staff candidates could enhance the effectiveness of staff recruitment.
- ❖ The College's standard policy of making all staff vacancies available to external applicants is a particularly progressive step, and constitutes a best practice. The team commends this attention to improving staff recruitment and recommends a similar level of commitment to staff development and retention.

### **Education and Scholarship**

#### ***Challenge 5: Developing a Curriculum That Fosters Intercultural and International Competencies***

- ❖ Programs such as the Summer Seminar in Puerto Rico Student Exchange, urban teaching preparation opportunities, and graduate student clinical experiences add real world opportunity to enhance intercultural competencies.
- ❖ Support for faculty development of curricula with diversity content is notable; however, specific information on exactly how this goal will be accomplished is needed.
- ❖ The team commends the faculty's increased research of diversity topics.

### **Institutional Viability and Vitality**

#### ***Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management***

- ❖ The elevation of the former Multicultural Coordinator position to that of Assistant Dean is an important step. It is the team's hope that—for continuity of operations and enhanced visibility of the College's diversity efforts—the position will be maintained at this level.
- ❖ Best Practice: Including the Assistant Dean for Multicultural Programs in the executive leadership of the College and involving that position with the scholarship award process is a best practice.

#### ***Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals***

- ❖ Volunteer participation of faculty on diversity/climate committees is praiseworthy, and the team advises the college administration to reward such participation. Staff participation should be similarly rewarded.
- ❖ It is evident that the College demonstrates a commitment to fostering diversity on many levels, but absent more specific metrics, it is not clear how and when organizational changes will take place to support the College's diversity goals.